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Pennsylvania. Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey.

PENNSYLVANIA TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE.

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PENNSYLVANIA

TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is approximately 288 miles wide and 160 miles deep, retangular in shape, whose center is located at approximately 41° North latitude and 78° West longitude. The total area of the state encompasses some 46,044 square miles, or 29.4 million acres.

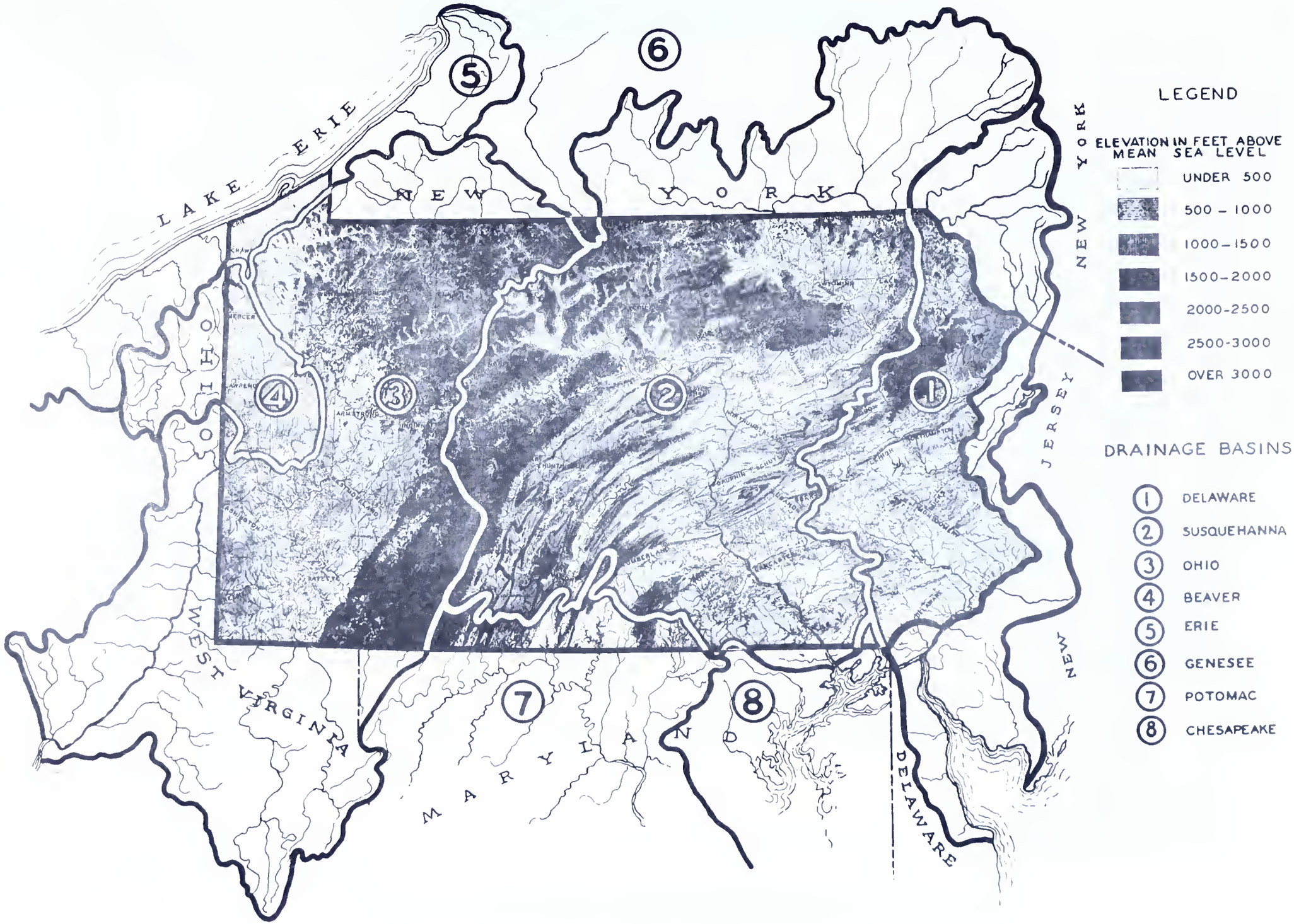
The erratic course of the Delaware River on the eastern border is the only natural boundary of the state, all others are arbitrary and do not conform to physical features.

In 1970 land use patterns indicated there was 58% forest land, 21% cropland, 8% urban and built-up areas, 6% pasture, 3% water, and 4% other areas. Five major river systems drain the area; the Susquehanna, Ohio, Delaware, Potomac, St. Lawrence along with minor portions of three other drainage systems; the Erie, Genessee, and Chesapeake. The borders of the state touch the tidewater of the Delaware on the southeast and the shores of Lake Erie on the northwest. Eastern and central Pennsylvania drains into the Atlantic Ocean, while the western portion drains mainly into the Ohio and thence the Mississippi. The Lake Erie plain drains to the northwest and flows through the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic Ocean.

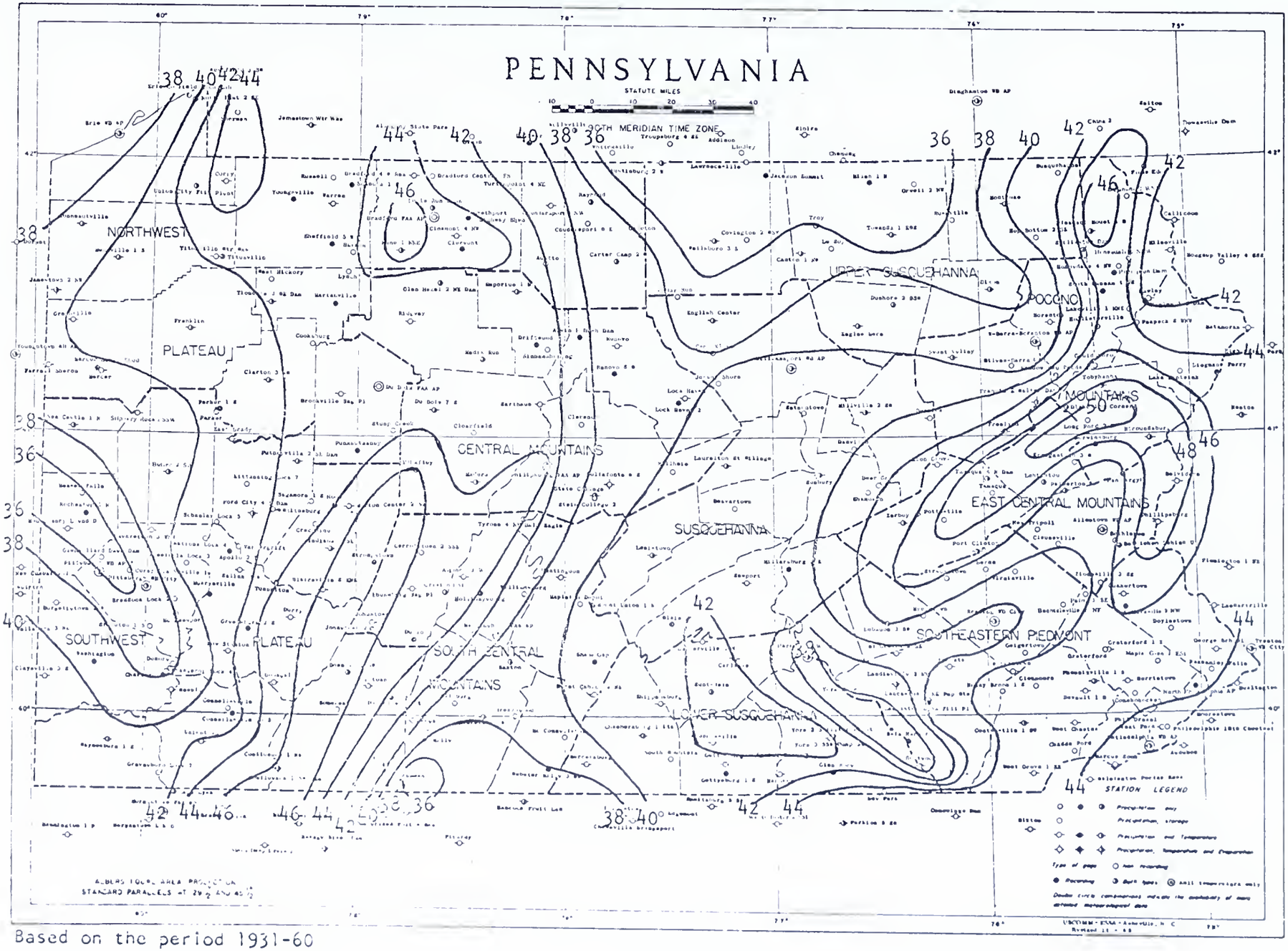
The dominant topographic feature of the state is the Appalachian Mountain Chain which sweeps across the state from southwest to northeast, while the north central portion is occupied by a high plateau. The plateau is the largest natural division of the state and occupies more than half the area. Elevations in the state range from sea level in the southeast on the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware state line, to a high peak, Mt. Davis on Negro Mountain towering 3,213 feet, in Somerset County in the southwest. The Blue Mountain forms the southeastern boundary of the mountain system while the western boundary is formed by Chestnut Ridge. The major land features of the state are completed by the rolling hills of the extreme southwest and southeast and a high bluff overlooking Lake Erie in the northwest which drops off to a narrow plain.

Annual snowfall ranges between wide limits from year to year and place to place. Some years produce less than 10 inches, while others produce upwards to 100 inches in the mountainous areas. Annual snowfall averages 20 inches in the extreme southeast to 90 inches in the north central area. Measurable snow generally occurs between November 20 and March 15, while the greatest monthly amounts usually fall in December and January.

PENNSYLVANIA TOPOGRAPHY



Mean Annual Precipitation, Inches



Based on the period 1931-60

Isolines are drawn through points of approximately equal value. Caution should be used in interpolating on these maps, particularly in mountainous areas.

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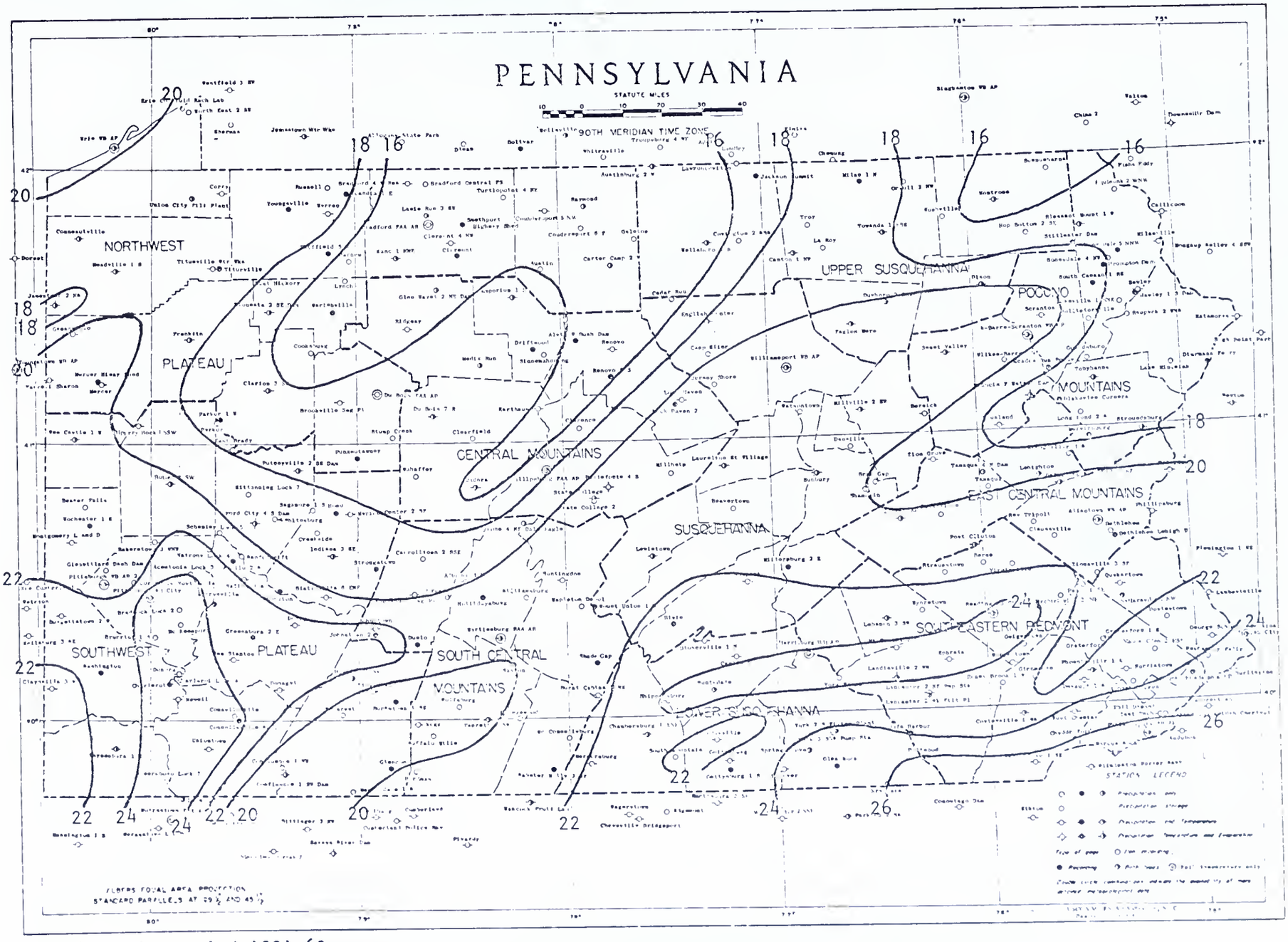
Mean Minimum Temperature (°F), January



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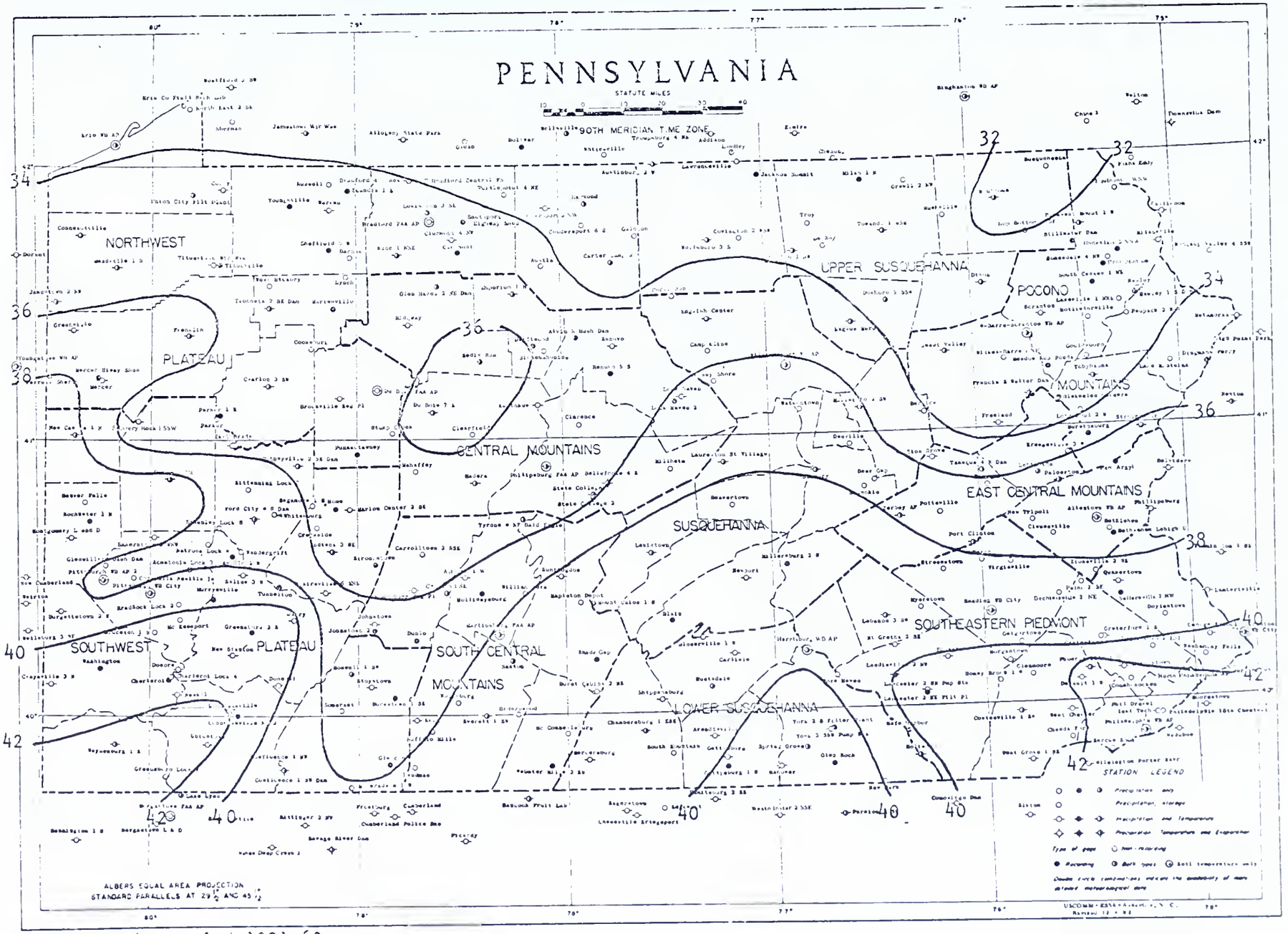
Mean Maximum Temperature (°F), January



Based on the period 1931-60

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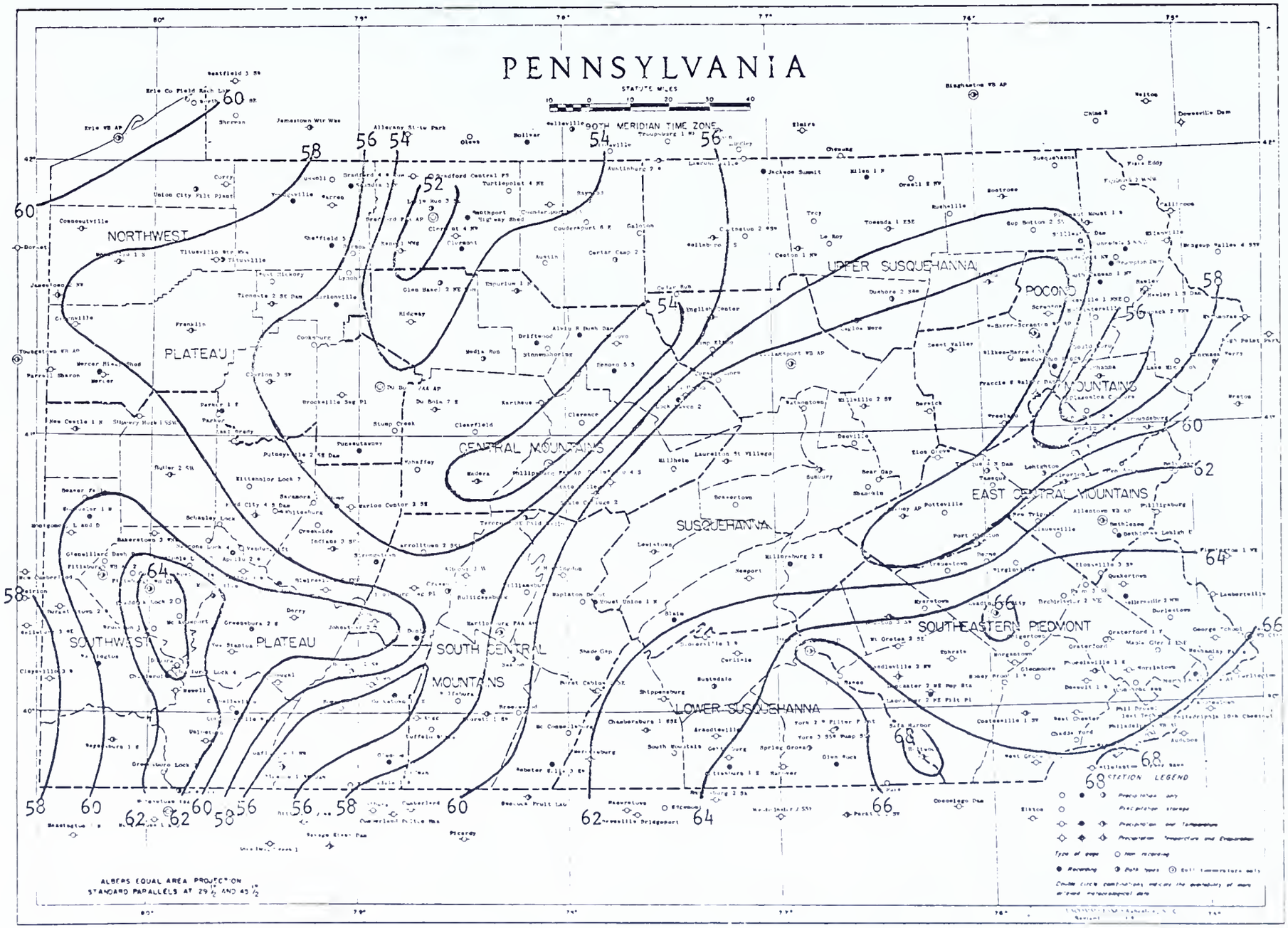
Mean Minimum Temperature (°F), July



Based on the period 1931-60

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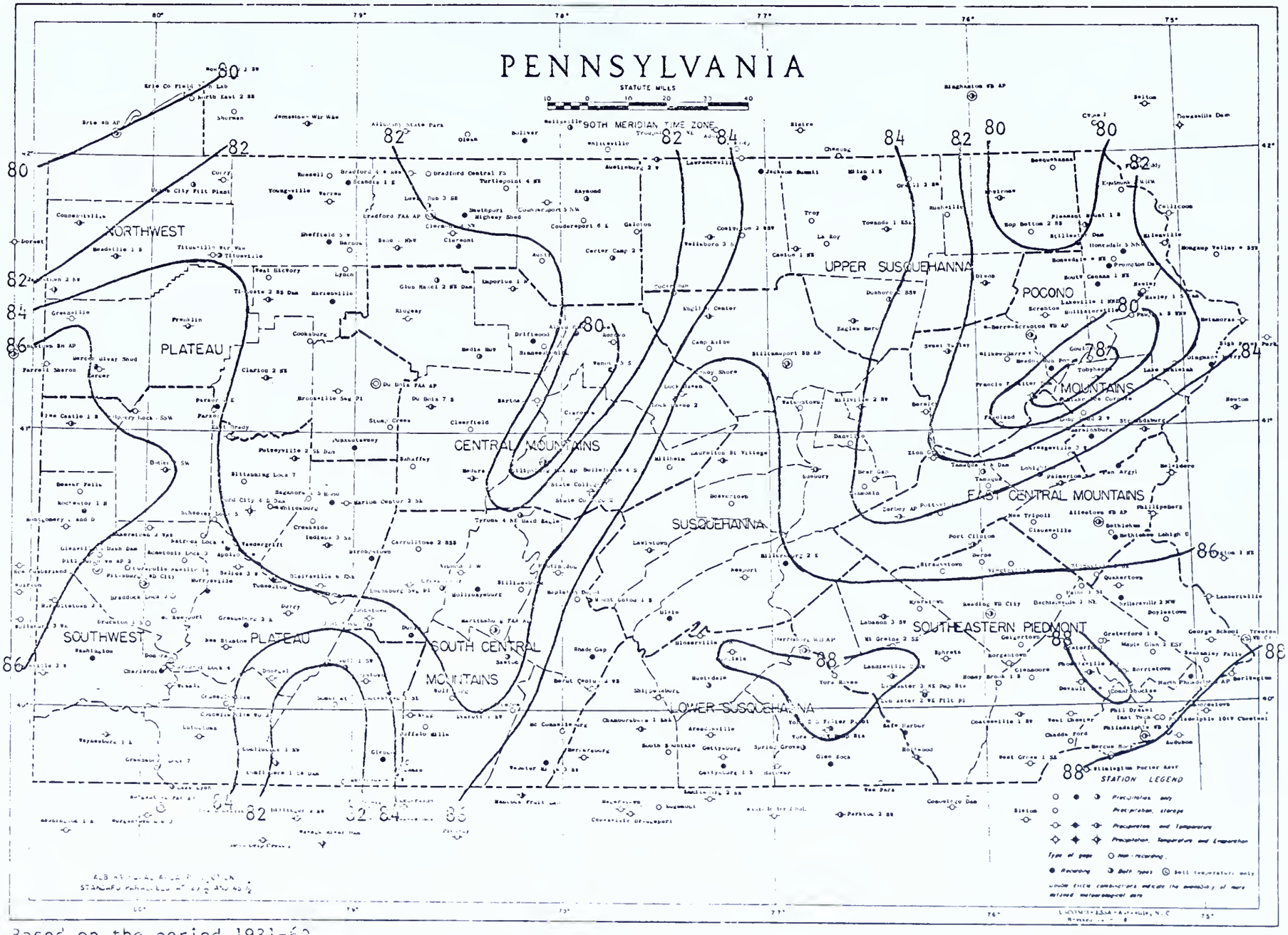
Mean Maximum Temperature (°F), July



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